

**METHODS AND SYSTEMS FOR DISTRIBUTING INFORMATION WITHIN A
DYNAMICALLY DEFINED COMMUNITY**

PRIORITY CLAIM

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/166,547, filed November 19, 1999 and U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/166,664, filed November 19, 1999 which are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

Background of the Invention

Field of the Invention

This invention relates to information distribution and filtering. More specifically, this invention relates to information processing methods for assisting users in sharing information related to transactions conducted over a network.

Description of the Related Art

Networked systems have become an increasingly prevalent and vital technology. Networks, such as the Internet, allow large numbers of computer systems and people to swiftly transfer data across the globe. Despite the tremendous benefits afforded by networking large numbers of systems and people together, significant challenges are posed as well. It has become increasingly difficult to evaluate the quality of data accessed over networks. The data often comes from sources unknown by the recipient. Thus each recipient often has to individually evaluate each incoming datum. Because it is impractical for individuals to evaluate large quantities of data, and because certain types of data cannot be adequately evaluated using automated systems, valuable data concealed in vast amounts of less valuable data is often ignored.

For example, online merchant Web sites commonly provide various types of informational services for assisting users in evaluating products and other offerings. Such services can greatly aid consumers in deciding which product or offering to purchase. These informational services are particularly valuable for online purchases, where customers do not have the opportunity to physically inspect or try out products.

One type of information service involves providing feedback from product users. The feedback may be in the form of reviews. These reviews may be from professional